Ali Peter John is an M.A. in English literature from the Bombay University. He was writing for India's prominent film magazine *Screen* for forty-eight long years. He has published twenty books during the last twenty years in his own way. The most prominent book according to him is his autobiography, *Life-Bits and Pieces*, which had its cover designed by the renowned painter M. F. Husain. This is the second edition with a new title.

He is now writing for a leading Hindi film magazine *Mayapuri* and at 71, he writes at least two articles every day. He hopes to write till he can no longer write.

ALI(VE) in Bits And Pieces

Ali Peter John

ALI(VE) in Bits And Pieces

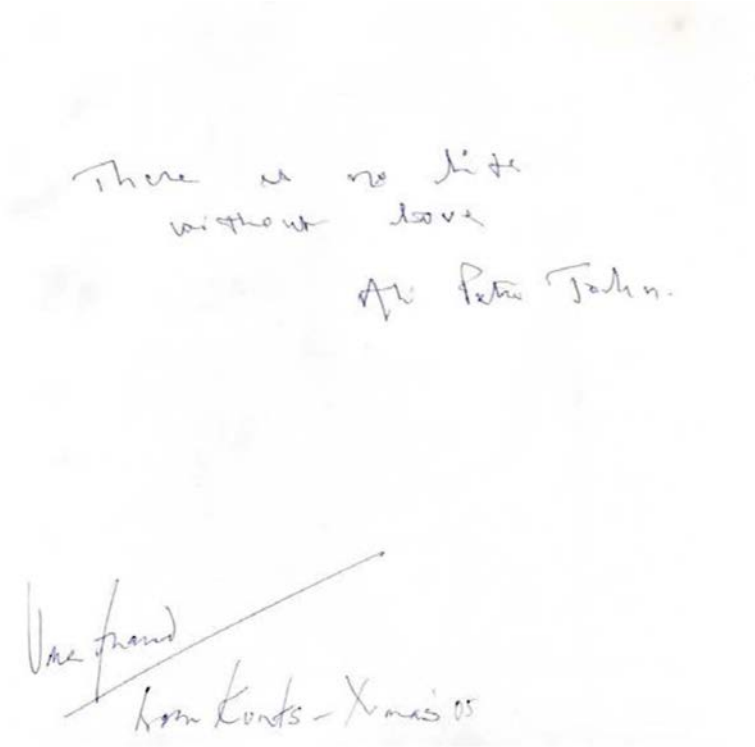
Ali Peter John

Copyright © 2022 Ali Peter John
All rights reserved.

Cover Design: By the well-known artist M F Husain

Note: The first edition of this book was published in 2002.

By professor toofaanii publishers, Lansing, MI USA


There is no life
without love
Ali Peter John.
Yours
from Kents - Xmas 05

For Molly

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Hemaa Singh who introduced me to Mr. Surjit Singh because of whom one more of my favourite dreams is all set to come true, and Mr. Shankar Iyer who did all the leg work.

Ali Peter John
Mumbai
March 2022

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
GODSWORD	8
WHO AM I	9
DADDY	12
HOME LIKE HELL	13
THE CHANGE	15
CONFUSION OVER CHRIST	16
THE RISE AND FALL	19
MOTHER WORLD	22
THE CRUSADER	27
THE STRUGGLE	31
LATIF COMPOUND	34
WHAT WILL I BE	37
LET'S NOT TALK	39
SHE IS LIFE	40
KHWAJA AHMAD ABBAS	43
BHAI	47
THE HUNGRY ANIMAL	49
MAN V/S MAN	50
FRAUD	51
STOP THAT WHEEL	52
WHY WISH MY WILL	54
I'LL NOT CRY	56
PLEASE DON'T HATE LOVE	58
VOTE OF THANKS	59
LIARS	61
PREFACE TO THE 2nd EDITION OF MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY	63
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	66
OTHER BOOKS BY THE PUBLISHER	67

INTRODUCTION

I am sure I can even swear that no man or woman, even the Popes have told the whole truth about their lives. It is very difficult.

It takes more than the courage of one's convictions, all the constant battles all the

struggles to decide what the truth is and what is not. It is not in the nature of man, in the making of man. Great attempts can be made but the greatest attempts made by the holiest of souls can never help them tell the whole truth. I am not being blasphemous but if Gandhi were alive I would have asked him if his experiments were based on the basis of real truth, the real truth about his great life. I have absolutely no pretensions of telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about myself.

I am no saint. I am no Pope. I am no Martin Luther King.

I am no Mother Teresa (meeting her personally is one of the most beautiful truths about my life because I know I will soon feel

I met a true saint in flesh and blood when she is dedicated a saint.)

I am an ordinary man but I have lived a strange but true life and survived fifty long years. What follows is an attempt at telling

the truth about my life but certainly not in the truth, which I hope to come up with when

I have all the courage it needs to.

This is no effort to aim at immortality. This is no attempt at writing great poetry or prose. I only felt it was time to tell the world the truth about my as I know it. This is an attempt to express myself as much as I can, expose the naked truth about my life till now. This is not even an attempt to shock or sensationalize or to scandalize.

This is just a simple man's all-out attempt, I feel, to tell the truth about himself when I feel and see truth going out of our lives in every field of life.

ALI PETER JOHN

GODSWORD

This is the first ever forward written by God. It was dictated by God to the author who sees dreams which very few human beings can dream or analyze he swears.

I am always very happy when one of my Creations comes up with the truth. I have needless to say been the greatest witness to the life of this lovable creation of mine. I have not gifted all my creations with the gift to tell the truth and the truth must be told. And I am gloriously happy that this little creation has made a gallant of attempt to touch the innermost linings of all the truths about its life. I feel proud when it tries and fights a grim and on-going on battle to touch the truth about itself as truthfully and as ruthlessly as possible. I have seen its struggle I have planned for it myself. I have seen how it has done me proud by going through all of its struggles and emerged through fire as a winner. I have been the closest witness to his father and his life its great mother and her life. I was responsible for taking them away to me after they had their share of their struggle. I had to if I had to see how this lovable creation fought its way and reach where it has. I wish my creation all the best. I am sure its struggle to tell the truth will inspire many other creations of mine to tell the truth. The truth is the way to heaven on earth and finally to heaven above. I bless my creation on this, his first brave attempt to tell the truth and I hope it serves a purpose and helps the world which I designed, a world which I see going from bad to worse grow into the world of my dreams.

God, Heaven, June 1, 2002

WHO AM I

Let me start by telling you the truth as I know it
About this name, I have been carrying
Like a problem, with seems to have no solution
There would be no problem
If this society where I have always found myself a stranger
A misfit, a mad man, been sane but it has and what are they it has
And I love it as it is and how I hope I was allowed
To name myself Mad
But I had to have a name, I had to have an identity
Mad Men are "killed" by the so-called intelligent men
I was told, I saw, experienced know much better
When I started learning life, I am still learning
So, then, let me tell you the story about my name
The first question I know people are going to ask is

The background the story that gave me this name
Yes, I do have a background, a story and an identity
Let me shock you by saying that I was born the second son
Of Haroon Ali and Maria Piedade Cardoza, also known as Mary
Haroon was a relative of the Nizam of Hyderabad
The elder brother of Dr Salim Ali the world-renown ornithologist
The brother of Zeenat Futehally
Who wrote a novel, *Zohra*, about my father's family
Which boasted a preface written by EM Forster
Mary my mother was his maidservant
Who looked after his four children after his second wife, Irene, eloped with my father's gardener
My father (they say look like him and I love the comparison)
He must have kept falling in love
I too kept falling in love
I am the creation of his love, after all
They named me Peter Ali, a Christian with a Muslim surname
I was Peter Ali till I was in school
Then I went to college and they wanted my full name
The administrator of admissions put a form before me
And said, 'write your surname first'

I wrote ‘Ali’, he then said ‘write your name’
I wrote ‘Peter’ then he asked ‘what’s your father's name?’
I stopped, stuttered, stammered, I was alone and lost
I knew myself only as Peter Ali
With no parents, both dead a long time ago
I knew my father Haroon was a Muslim who was converted to Christianity
Who was given in a name ‘John’, I wrote ‘John’
‘What kind of name is this?’ he growled
And said, ‘anyway, fill the form soon or you will get no admission
I filled the farm in fear and was called Ali Peter John within minutes
And now for life, a name which has created endless problems for me
Am I a Muslim? Am I a Christian? I am safer as Peter I realize
And not so safe as Ali in secular India, I realized as time passes
There are powers who ask me, even plead with me to change my name
If not for love then at least for safety
And I refuse, I will always refused
I am Ali Peter John, I will always be Ali Peter John
Let the word or secular India say or do what it was to me

DADDY

My friends never had their daddys carried home
Carried by four men, four different young men everyday
Making fun of him, mocking him
With a brood of rowdy children walking behind them
Crying out 'hey bewda, hey bewda'
They brought him home and dumped him on his bed
A bed which was more than a hundred years old
He mumbled, groaned, grumbled and went off to sleep
While my mummy cursed her fate and cried
He woke up late in the evening only to go back
To comeback carried by four other men
It took me some time to realize what the word 'bewda' meant
I asked my mummy and she told me
A 'bewda' meant a drunkard, a man who drank liquor
Till he lost all his senses, till he fell on streets, on roads and in gutters
Till he was found and saved by some good samaritans
Only to fall and be saved the next time
He was my daddy and he was a drunkard, a 'bewda'
I remember him only by the smell of cheap liquor, Charminar cigarettes and his sweat
I had a strange liking for them, the smells, I mean
I snuggled up to him at nights to imbibe the smells which are still a part of me, a part of my daddy in me
I was six years old then.

HOME LIKE HELL

Home was a hole, a little room
Built of bamboo sticks held together with cowdung
No door, yes no door just holes as doors and windows
We had neighbors who lived in the same holes
Come rain, come storm, neighbors of all seasons
Our homes were surrounded by, pigs stray dogs and all kinds of snakes, cobras and pythons too
The forest was not far off, the forest the fear of which
Forced mummy never to let us children walk out
The floor was paved with cowdung which my mummy changed with fresh cowdung every month
The tiles were so old, they are cracks and holes in them
From which the heat and the rain came in, it was part of life
Our home was hell but mummy always kept as neat and tidy
She never let anyone add to the misery hell already was

Mummy soon made it her duty, her mission to send us to school
I don't know from where her money came but she sent us to the best school around
A convent school run by priests and nuns
The teachers tell my mummy that I am a good student
I know my prayers, I study well, I am no problem for them
I have never been a problem to anyone to this day
Unless problems come my was as a challenge
To myself and to my self respect which I strongly feel I have earned
Through my determination
Never to give up
Never to surrender
Never to say no
Come hell or heaven when and if it comes

THE CHANGE

I remember the day, how can I forget that day, July 23rd 1959
There was a sudden change seen my daddy by the entire village
He was never carried home
He stayed home all day
He read the Bible
He fiddled with mummy's rosary and met the local parish priest
He expressed his desire to be converted
He wanted to be Roman Catholic
He was a staunch Muslim, I realized later
The parish priest was happy, he said it was better late than never
My daddy went to church every evening
To have long sessions with the parish priest
And soon the day was decided for him to be converted

CONFUSION OVER CHRIST

My mummy never look so happy
She got him a new pair of trousers and is sky-blue shirt
There was peace in hell at last
No little boys cried 'bewda hai, bewda hai'
Mummy didn't curse her fate or cry
Then that morning July 23, 1959 dawned
There was a commotion in hell before I could wake up
My daddy was carried home again
This time he was not drunk, he was unconscious
He had collapsed in the bedroom
The doctor was sent for and so was the parish priest
The parish parish said his prayers in Latin and then said
'Rise, John, soldier of Christ'
John was a name chosen by mummy for Haroon Ali
And Dr Balchandra Pandurang Medhekar looked away, felt his pulse
Mr Haroon Ali, the newly converted John was dead
He had a massive heart attack. I was told later
I realized how much man depends on his heart that day, depends on the heart for in life
That was just the beginning of daddy's death and his funeral to follow
His family, his Muslim family who had disowned him for his years claimed him overnight
They wanted him to be buried according to Islamic rites
they even brought the bier and the Moulvi

But mummy's people were adamant
They would have nothing of it
And now Haroon Ali had even had been converted accepted by Christians
And elderly man, mummy's Godfather took on the Muslims single-handed
He stopped the Muslims and their procession before they could enter the village
He was joined by some others, they were all ready for a showdown
Armed with stones, sticks iron rods and even knives
The Muslim group, all enlightened people except a few were taken aback
Then the elders of the two communities got together and came to a conclusion
They said Mary's wish would be the final word
Mary opted for a church burial and that was final
The fanatics among the Muslims went berserk but they could not do a thing
They beat a hasty retreat and boycotted daddy's funeral
The better Muslims, the understanding Muslims joined mummy in her moment of grief
A young widow with three little sons
Hectic preparations were made for the Christian funeral
The cheapest coffin, Rupees 25 only was ordered, a second hand suit with tie, shoes and socks were bought
He was dressed up like he had never dressed up in years
His favourite books, some newspapers, specially *The Indian Express*, his glasses, his pen, a packet of Charminar cigarettes,
And a bottle of country liquor
Were all placed beside him in his coffin, he was all set for his final journey
There was a huge crowd, a number of posh cars and a blend of very rich and very poor people
And wreaths and more wreaths and bouquets filled our home which was hell only till yesterday
My little wondered how my daddy had become so popular, so famous
While lying in a cheap coffin dressed in a second-hand suit

The rain poured and continue to pour relentlessly but the crowd never stopped coming in to have a last look
Then there was a technical problem, the grave prepared for him
Was continuously being filled with water
How would they how would they lower the coffin and bury it with mud which just kept flowing away?
Two days passed and there was no hope of the rain stopping
They were all in a hurry to bury him, they did not want to see his body decay
So the funeral procession started
A line up of cars and all kinds of people, his friends,
relatives and above all his drinking partners walked in the rain without minding it
They had to bid farewell today after all,
They all prayed for his soul, did he believe in a soul?
The Christians and the Muslims prayed
The Hindus and the Parsis prayed
The bar owners and bar tenders prayed
Then they had to lower his coffin into the grave which had turned into a lake
The more they put the coffin down the more it came up
I had never seen something like that, I have never seen anything like that again
My daddy was someone special
I knew he was different from all the daddys I saw
I was sure he was different that morning
I remember everything about him
I was six when he died but I still remember all the days I saw him, all the things I saw happen to him
I knew I had seen him in his bad days
I was sure he had seen better days.

THE RISE AND FALL

Yes my daddy had seen better days
He had loved like a king, I was told
He belonged to a Royal family, the family of the Nizam of Hyderabad
I don't know the lineage, I don't want to know, it is too complicated
All I know is that he was born rich
He was very well-educated, he was also very world-wise, they say
The young Haroon Ali went to Japan to do business
I don't know what business he did
But I know he fell in love with a woman who died after giving birth to a daughter
His story starts growing complicated
He leaves Japan, comes home to Bombay
He continues doing business but also falls in love again with a woman called Irene, an Anglo-Indian
He is considered a rebel in the family
He adds strength to their belief in him
He has four children from Irene, his story says that he soon goes wayward
He takes to heavy drinking, owning cars and race horses and gambling
He loses heavily, he's declared bankrupt

His wife, Irene, cannot take it and so it seems
She falls in love with his garden, his 'Mali' elopes with him
Leaving her four children behind and Haroon Ali in a hopeless case
He looks very good woman, a nanny
To look after his four children
He finds Mary in a woman home, and takes her home, makes her a part of it
She looks after his children by their mother could never
He is impressed and indebted to her
The rebel in him breaks all the rules, he marries Mary, his children's nanny, the maidservant
His rich family throws him out, takes away his children from him and puts them in a boarding school
He is a lost man, he finds solace, salvation and the symbol of sacrifice in Mary
He has three children from her, three sons, Robin, Roy and me
He lets very bring up us according to her faith
We grew up as devout Roman Catholics without any interference from Haroon Ali
Mary dedicates her life to her home and his children
Though she is disowned by her own family, her father, has seven sisters and four brothers
All landowners in Mangalore
Haroon Ali goes absolutely bankrupt, becomes a good-for-nothing drunkard
Mary still takes care of him and his sons
The Ali family is grateful to her
They know she has brought up Irene's children

Now they know all she is bringing her own children
They decide to pay her monthly 'salary', a royal some of Rupees 70 only
For which she has to meet Sameena Phoophi
one of my aunts who drives down to Bandra Station, hands over the money to her and leaves
Mary is admired only at the railway station
Mary goes through hell till Haroon Ali dies as John and is buried in water covered by muck
Haroon Ali, it is said, was a very good writer too
He had written hundreds of pages about his life, about how he had cheated himself
how he had cheated others and more than all that truth
the truth about his being treated by his family, the Royalty
It is shockingly said that his two younger sisters Zeenat and Sameena got their greasy hands on those pages
Read the terrible truths about themselves and burnt every page
Burnt the truth according to Haroon Ali, their rebel brother
The burning of those pages
Burnt all of of Haroon Ali's identity
He burnt all his associations with Royalty
And spent the last days of his life in that hole of a room in a village near a forest
And a chapter with could have been a very glorious chapter
I feel came to an end, an end he did not deserve
But, then, what is that thing that they said about destiny shaping the lives of men,
big or small rolling in riches or rolling in gutters?

MOTHER WORLD

The holy Ali family continue to take care(!) of Mary and her sons
With that monthly 'salary' of Rupees 70 only
How could Mary manage the home and her three growing up sons
The Royal holy family found no reason or time to think
in their palaces on Pali Hill
There are more misery to come
The large-hearted (that's what they called her) landlady
Of hell, our home on earth, decided to demolish hell
To build a new house in honor of her husband Matthew
Who had died just two months before Haroon Ali died
Incidentally the large-hearte lady's husband and Haroon Ali were good
friends and great drinking partners
Matthew died on May 18, 1959 and Haroon Ali followed on July 23, the
same year
They kept the promise they had made to each other
They lived like friends and died like friends but
The large-hearted landlady did not think even once
Of where Mary, her dear friend and her three little sons would go
She just demolished hell

And left us literally in the open, homeless and hopeless
Now we did not have even the hell we had to live in
Then, Mary, my mummy gathered courage
Went to a place surrounded by huge boulders and bought a piece of land
From a man called Latif Abdul Cyclewallah
Adversity had given Mary, my mummy, extraordinary courage
She hired a few working hands and joined them in moving the boulders
What started after the boulders were moved is a story of another mother India
She borrowed some money from a friend who cared
And started building her own home with her own hands
She and some unknown faces slogged day and night
And built a house with bamboo sticks, cowdung, mud and hay
We had a roof to hide our heads at last
She moved into her house and people marveled at this one woman miracle
Soon many others followed her brave example and built similar houses
The barren land strewn with boulders had changed into a haven for the homeless
And within no time the entire land was covered by little houses like Mary's house
Mary proudly called her house 'M Ali House' and she kept improving on it
With a garden, growing her own vegetables and fruits
She was 'Mary Aunty', a name to respect now
But she had to make a living too

How could she and her three sons live on Rupees 70 only
The prices were rising and so were our needs
She thought of ways and ways and then thought of one way
She decided to run her own industry!
She decided to distill country liquor
There were others who were already in the competition
She joined the competition with courage, she had no other way out, we had to survive
She learned the 'art' of distilling liquor
The buying of jaggery ('gud') degree and a white slab of chemical called 'navsaghar'
It was the 'thing' that inspired intoxication
She bought a number of pots in which the jaggery ('gud') and 'navsaghar' were mixed
And left to ferment in holes dug and covered with her own hands
The next morning the fermented blend was poured into a huge drum
A huge aluminum vessel with water was placed on it and dry wood was set on fire
A steel plate was placed inside the drum with a tube attached to it
Minutes later the magic worked
Drop by drop the discount liquor fell into a bottle and then bottle after bottle
My little brother, Roy, helped her in the distilling process
While I keep watch for the police rounds and police raids which were common
It was illicit business, after all
Soon 'Mary Aunty' and her business flourished and was the best business in the village

The police came, they raided her house regularly but it was all a show
They called her 'aai' (mother), 'tai' (sister) and even 'devi' (Goddess)
All they wanted was some money, her 'aashirwad', some money, cheaply called 'hafta'
They warned her in advance when they would raid her house
They begged of her to give them a case
To prove their 'hoshiari' to their 'sahibs'
Cases were filed against her case, cases came up for hearing in dark and dingy courts
But the police always saw that 'Mary Aunty' came out free not guilty
She used to keep them happy, was a guest at their children's birthday parties and all the festivals
There were other Auntys in the business too
But "Mary Aunty's" stuff was the best her customers said
Hordes of men walked in and out of her house
She was the boss, I her an accountant and my little brother, Roy, her security guard
He was born tough, he knew how to go when the going got tough at a very young age
'Mary Aunty' prospered, it was hard and risky work but there was good money too
Good clothes, good food, good birthday parties and great festivals to celebrate
And soon a major battle started
The other aunties in the business but not happy with her
Their envy reached new depths when she became an 'exporter'
When her stuff was wanted even in high places all over the city because she believed in quality
We learn her carriers, we getting the stuff in our school bags

We carry the stuff in well washed rubber bladders and tubes wrapped all over our bodies
And went to various places after she prayed for our safety to all the Gods of the world
Her prayers were always heard or so it seemed
We were never caught, not even looked at with suspicion
We were very good at our jobs and she looked after us with greater care every time we returned safely
She celebrating our birthdays like weddings and fed hundreds of the pool and donated large sums of money to the orphanages
The neighbors couldn't take this widow's success
They started all kinds of attacks on her
They spread false stories about her
They paid the police to raid her house almost everyday
They even started an attack on her character
We were too young but my little brother was an angry little boy
He wanted to kill all of them, he always said
She stopped him from going wild but I knew he was going wild for the first time
When he almost killed a neighbor's son for saying something nasty about mummy
Boys who were double his age and even stronger scattered as soon as he walked the streets
There was something about his fists they were the fists of sheer fury
He could knock out a six-footer with just one job of his fist
But attacks on 'Mary Aunty' continued and I could see her crumble
She cut down on her business and her customers were pained
She told them she couldn't take the taunts and threats but she was a fighter still

THE CRUSADER

Yes, my mummy was a fighter, the kind of fighter I have never seen
She was absolutely illiterate
She came to Bombay in quest of a job as a maidservant or an 'ayah'
She ended up in a woman's home
The why of it I never dared to ask her and will never ever know
She picked up the courage to face life in that home
She mastered the art of living a tough life there
She saw other women who were much more unfortunate than her
Which made her take a stand in life
She would see to it that she was not unfortunate, that no one called her unfortunate
She learned English without knowing an alphabet of the language
She could speak it better than some of the most educated people she came across
She knew every prayer in English by heart without knowing the meaning of what she was saying, sorry, praying
She always said it was not important
It was not important knowing how she was praying because she knew God understood
He understood what she told him, she prayed for, asked for
She met Haroon Ali and married him
She knew he was down and out when she married him
But she never thought of running from the reality
She faced live as it came, she faced life like fighting fire

She never found peace in her own life but she made it her goal
To give others love, give others peace, give others understanding
She solved problems between lovers of different communities
At the risk of facing grave threats to her own life
She brought warring husbands and wives on the brink of breaking up together again
She saved drunkards, destitute women and delinquent children
She was there every time there was a calamity, a crisis or a catastrophe among communities
She got people married with her own money, she got little girls out of the traps of ruthless women
She beat up the beaten track in everything she did
She was a woman of her own convictions and in a class of her own
She was a woman who had fought more than the fire that was in her but
She could not fight the attacks of barbarians, beasts and brutes
Her relatives, her neighbors, and even her so-called well wishers
She could not take the attacks of men who were not men enough, of women who were not woman
She was tired, she lost her will
She knew what she was doing
And she did it, she to talk to drinking
She drank straight from the 'bhatti', the distillery
She soon learned every organ in her body
She was just a shadow of the 'Mary Aunty' she was
The world had wounded her grievously
She rejected the world, she rejected all her people
It was painful to see this woman of courage

Crumble to pieces and hide from the world which she wants wanted to conquer
Till that day when she went to sleep, asking me and my little brother, Roy, not to wake her up
We were busy playing some exciting cricket
We came home for lunch, she was still sleeping
It was evening and she was still sleeping
We didn't know what to do, we call Dr Medhekar
He asked her to rush her to Sion Hospital
We called the parish priest who drank his heart out in our house every night
He prayed for her and said God would take care of her
And I rushed her to the hospital, spent the whole night watching junior doctors tampering with her body lying in a coma
In the middle of the night they asked me if I wanted someone else to be close to her
I did not know why till the next afternoon when the parish priest came visiting and again said all would be well
And two nurses and white came close to her and covered her with a white sheet
She was dead
'Mar gayi hai who, lekar jaane ki tayyari karo, khat khali karne ka hi', a harsh voice said and I was in daze
I was thirteen then
I had to make all the arrangements to give her a decent funeral
One of my horrible holy aunts from the Hills asked me
"What is the budget of her funeral?"
Budget of her funeral? I felt like running away from it all
I felt like throttling that aunt from the Hills
But I needed the money to bury her
The parish priest who was her friend asked me "Permanent grave or temporary? High mass or low mass?"

I never saw his face, I put all the money I had in his hands and ask him to do whatever he wanted to
There was a smile on his face, clearly the smile of a slimy ,fake holy man
He again said "She must have already reached the gates of Heaven"
I did not understand, I was silent
I could not for whatever little life was left in me understand how a man of God
And a priest could talk like that
Anyway 'Mary Aunty' was buried in a temporary grave after a low mass was said
All because I had no money to give her the decent funeral I owed her
Something for which I still feel guilty without still knowing whether I am guilty or not
Under the circumstances in which her death caught me
A month after my mother died some leaders of my community
Came up to me and said I had to feed all the people in my compound
They also gave me the menu
Idlis, bread, rice, chicken, mutton and fish
I asked them if they had gone mad
My little brother and me were living on tea and dry chappatis for breakfast, lunch and dinner
And they wanted a feast from me!
"Do it or your mother's soul will go to hell", they said
I said, "but father D'Silva says she has already reached heaven"
"He is talking crap, he's a drunkard, what does he know about God?", an elderly friend of the priest said
I drove them all out
They cursed me and pitied my mother's soul
I could see my mother smiling. I don't know why I smiled back at her

THE STRUGGLE

It is one big struggle
How will these boys survive?
The elder son is just thirteen, the younger seven
How will they manage?
Who will look after them?
The whole compound is worried
We survived on some money given by our dear aunt from the Hills
She doesn't understand or pretends not to understand the pitiable state we are in
Another aunt comes to the scene, our very dear old Aunt Anne, my mother's elder sister and her entire family
She promises to take care of us, she takes over our home
She gets her family in and we are her paying guests
She buys groceries from the store next door
Feeds us on a staple diet of dry chappaties and dal day in and day out
Her family occupied our beds, we are forced to sleep on the floor
Soon, dear old Aunt is after my mother's gold
I refuse to hand over the keys
Then Aunt Anne tries her best to take over the house built by my mother's sweat and toil

I put my foot down
Then comes a grocer's bill
Four hundred and fifty rupees a month in 1965
one aunt doles out a sum of Rupees 70
Another places a bill of Rupees four hundred and fifty for all those dry chappaties and dal and humiliation of all kinds of day
My little brother takes a tough decision
He decides to do away with any help from both the aunts
We decide not to take any more charity from our aunt heart from the Hills
We decide to throw Aunt Anne her family out
The first aunt is relieved, the second raves and rants
The neighbors say the boys will now certainly die of starvation
How can they treat their dear Aunt Anne so badly
The brothers will survive, my little brother tells me
He takes up a job in a mill even while he is studying
He also takes up some tuitions and asks me not to worry, only study
We survived now on dry chappaties eaten sometimes with salt and sometimes sugar
A rare recipe prepared by my little brother
I finished my SSC, first class and am sent to college by my little brother
He brings in the money and asks me not to ask from where
We carry on
We get used to living on the bits and pieces of life

It is a tough fight it is a strange pleasure too
I turn out to be a good student, I always was my teachers in school told me
I win a series of scholarships, no fees and free books
I never know where I complete my studies and how
There are times when I wake up in the middle of the night and scream
It's a dream, it's a dream
I can't believe how I have survived so long
We, me and my little brother have
Poverty could have killed us
Starvation could have strangled us
Deprivation of parents, good relatives, anyone who could love us, who could care for us
I never knew what a father really was
I was almost about to know what a mother was when she was snatched away in her prime
I could have been dead just thinking about a bleak future
I could have died of sheer neglect
I could have died, killed by the indifference of people
I could have died of some ailment
Some strange disease
I could have died because of the conditions I lived in
I could have died because there was no real reason to live
But I survived and I still survive
The old ghosts still stalk me
They still want to kill me but I know I shall not be killed so soon if I have survived all this and much more

LATIF COMPOUND

I will not pay telling you even half the truth about me if
I don't tell you about Latif Abdul Cyclewallah Compound
Where I spent the best part of my life
Or was it the worst?
A cluster of little hells of all shapes and sizes
People of every caste, creed and community
But still blowing into one all-powerful religion, poverty
Here there are no rules, no laws
No culture, no civilization, no education
Survival is important
Survival of the fittest
Earning a living is the only thing that matters here
It is a different world, a world far away from the world outside
There are men who spend their time gazing at the sky

There are women who slog it out in their own homes or in the homes of the rich
Or falling the oldest profession in faraway places in Bombay
Bombay is a very faraway place, a dream city for people here
The children have oblivious of optimism
The future does not have time to think about them
They know only hunger, thirst and more hunger
And there are hordes of children
Making children seems to be the only productive job here
The people are all very innocent, very ignorant and they are all beasts too
The men beat their wives as a way of life
The wives to beat their husbands
Sometimes the wife and children get together and beat up the head of the family
For not providing them with food, with anything good
There are crimes committed at all times and justice is done on the spot, instant justice
A father rapes his own daughter
The daughter tells the next door neighbor
The neighbor tells all the people
The father is chained to a chair

Stoned by every man, woman and child till he is almost given up for dead
He is then carried away to an unknown place
And is never heard of again
The beautiful daughter, her beautiful sisters and their mother
Are all protected by the people, some money is collected
And they are sent away to Mangalore, their native place
A man peeps into a makeshift bathroom
To see a woman bathing
He is caught by women and it smashed all over by them with stones
He too is half dead and he and his family are found missing the next morning
A brother rapes his own sister
They are whipped and she stripped and thrown out, banished
Two years later they return
They have another child
There are now living together like husband and wife
The people stone them again and they are to vanish only God knows where
Thieves big and small, are stoned unconscious
The law of the jungle prevails
Life goes on in the raw and I watched this whole sordid saga unfolding itself for twenty-seven long years

WHAT WILL I BE

I am last list filled with anguish
Will I too grow into a beast
I spend my time out of Latif Compound
I look for places to study
For places where I can find light in more ways than one
I dream of becoming a priest
I see the behavior of some of the reverend priests and give up the idea instantly
I dream of becoming a bus conductor
I make friends with conductors who help me try to realize my dream while they are on night duty
I enjoy ringing the bell, I enjoy the tea the conductors have
After every trip, every round
I want to be a conductor only because of my fascination for their uniform
The power of the uniform and the endless cups of tea
I want to be a lawyer
I spend every day of my vacations in the magistrates' courts meeting crime face-to-face
I see face of crime
I see the law being played with by lawyers
I see the lucky ones who tell better life growing richer, making more and more money
And I see the unlucky ones standing outside like beggars outside a marketplace or a temple
I shudder to see myself in their place

I throw out my brief and my case to be a lawyer
Into a dirty dustbin outside a court, a dustbin full of white papers with black lies written all over them
I decide to become a bohemian, a poet, a singer a great singer, with a guitar in a railway compartment
I grow my hair, wear cheap kurtas, torn or borrowed sandals, walk along Juhu Beach
Trying to write what I think is poetry
Poetry which will shake up the world
Destroy the world that is and build a new one
The people I live with think I have gone mad00
My little brother asked me to see reason and not to give up hope
Good times will come, we will have to make them come, he says
And I believe every word my little brother who has by now grown into my father says
My little brother knows how to deal with the world
He gets a better job
He makes a lot of money
I don't know how
But he cannot tolerate injustice of any kind
He cannot take any wrong done to anyone
He is an angry man
He decides to punish everyone he sees doing wrong
The village fears him, he strikes terror into the hearts of every wrong doer.
The villages is soon known as 'Roy ka gaon' (Roy's village)
I am known as 'Roy ka bhai' and it gives me a strange sense of pride and pleasure
He seems to have decided to take revenge on a society he believes has wronged him

LET'S NOT TALK

Yes, I have never talked about my elder brother
I don't want to, I don't think I ever will
Because even thinking of him reminds me of the monster within me
He first gave me the idea that there is a monster in every man
He made my little brother a monster
He almost made me one, I did not allow him to
I don't want to talk about him because I know the monster in me is still alive
I have tamed it, almost put it to sleep. I have no intentions of waking it up just because of a brother who was *never* a brother
And that is the closest I can come to the truth about him

SHE IS LIFE

I knew she was from my village
She was from a landlord's family, a good family, a holy family
I had seen her but I had never seen her like I saw her that day
That one look changed me, changed everything about me
I believed even when I was eight
I knew I had a heart but I felt my heart beats
I knew I was alive and I was living that day
I knew I was not the same boy I was
I knew I would never be the same way again
She was like a spirit who tip-toed into my life
I lived for her since that day
I still live for her
I will always live because of her, for her
My breath, my moments, my minutes
Every step I took had and still has her stamp on it
And I did not know what love was
How could I who did not even know what life was?

Cruel circumstances took her away from me
A sign of things to come for me
I knew she was destined to be taken away from me again and again all the time all along the way
I found time, I made time to see her at least once every day
She was always there before I was
We never met four years after that day but I saw her every day
I met her again only after SSC examinations
I wanted to to talk to her first
But she did
I could have died with delight that moment but her talk give me a new life
I went to her college only to be close to her
I don't know how I lived for years but I never missed any chance to see her, in church
in the streets, at bus stops, outside her house, her father's grocery shop, everywhere
Those days I live surrounded by insecurity, hungry, thirsty with nothing but only love,
An all-encompassing love consuming me all the
I breathed her I knew I live only because of her
I did all the good things I did only because of her
I avoided all the bad things about life only because of her
I saw all that was good in life only in her
We became friends

I was in paradise
I met her everyday, talked to her but I never talked sense
I was a madman madly in love
'What's wrong with you?' she asked me once and I had no answers
How I wish I knew and told her then!
How I wish I can still know and tell her now!
Her talk healed me, helped me forget all my problems
Her smile add knife to my meaningless life
How one look changed the look of the ugly world for me
She had to just ask and I moved heaven, shook up God to help me.
fulfill her with
I believe my love wasn't love like the world loves
It couldn't be, it was something else which I don't understand and would never like to understand
Love is not for understanding, love is only to love without realizing the consequences
without knowing what it does to you, what it does to your entire being, to your entire existence
My friends say I failed in love
I never failed because I never faced love as an exam, it was and is my only meaning,
my only mission in life
She is a nun today and I know my faith in my love for her
which could have made anyone else a God will at least make her a saint one day
I know God knows it

KHWAJA AHMAD ABBAS

I never tried finding a job
I lived every day as it came
But I never stop learning from life
After reading all those books by men and women who claim to know life but I believe didn't
This world would have been paradise
If every human being new what life is, what love is
Anyway, that day I was reading a paper called Blitz
A paper I never missed, beg, borrow or steal
I read it from page to page but 'The Last Page' was my favorite
It was written by a man called Khwaja Ahmad Abbas
He inspired me, he rocked my thoughts and fired my imagination
I remember reading one of his last pages which set me aflame
I borrowed a ten naya paisa from a poor friend
Bought a post card, borrowed a pen, and wrote what I felt about what he wrote

And posted it to the Blitz office and forgot all about it
Three days later the postman called me
Postmen, priests and gentlemen rarely walked into the Latif Compound
He had a letter for me he said
I was surprised out of my flu, it was a letter from Khwaja Ahmad Abbas
He had thanked me for what I had written and asked me to see him
I couldn't believe such things happened but I decided to meet
He was not like the usual image of a great writer I had
He struck me as a simple man with simple tastes when I met him in his office
He fired me with a volley of questions and then I asked me if I would work with him
I said yes without thinking twice
'Hundred rupees a month', he said
'Very good', I said and walked all the way back home
I worked with Abbas for two years
And what I learned from him in two years I had not learned in all my life till then
And can't learn from anyone else now
Hundred rupees word starvation money, according to my friends
But for me they were very precious, I learn to live on tea and one poor meal a day
But was very happy with the very thought of working with this great simple man
At the end of two years Abbas asked me if I never felt hungry
if I never had any ambitions to rise in life

I said I was happy working with him and nothing else matters
He asked me to be practical
He said there was a weekly called 'Screen' and he knew the editor, Mr SS Pillai very well
He gave me an introduction letter and asked me to meet Mr Pillai in Bombay
I had never seen Bombay, the heart of Bombay where are the big offices were
I found the office and also found a father figure in Mr Pillai
He gave me a two-minute test and then asked me if I was interested in working for 'Screen'
I said I would think about it
What arrogance! What insecurity! What hidden fears!
I kept meeting Mr Pillai every week after that meeting
And every time he asked me when I could join
What was happening?
Was this good man not finding any other man when there was so many young men looking for jobs all over?
He waited three long months for me, and insignificant no one from nowhere
At the end of three months he said if I did not join on January 2, 1975
He would give the job to someone else
Again I said I would think about it and wondered why
I couldn't think of sitting in an office for eight long hours
I could I could not follow any rigid rules, any code of discipline
I thought about his threat 4 days then decided to take a chance
Today, twenty-seven years later I am still here loving every moment of it

Thinking of what I would be doing if I had not joined 'Screen' that day
What can I see about the twenty-seven years which is an entire lifetime and more?
I have lived several lives
I have seen several life
I have seen men and women with masks and without them
I have seen great people and small people
I have seen all that is good and all that is bad
I have made right decisions and wrong decisions
I have seen people rising and falling, empires growing and crumbling
I have seen people living like kings and queens and dying like paupers
I have faced by your own trials and tribulations
I have faced threats and torments
From people who are fit to stand up straight
I have experienced heaven and hell here
People often ask me why I never looked for greener pastures when I was younger
I tell them I still feel as young as I was when I first joined 'Screen'
I knew I couldn't be as happy as I have been here
I knew I would not be what I am without being here
I, the man and worker who have worked without any ambitions, without any regrets
I still receive some very tempting offers but I can never leave this place which is home for me
not even home away from home but home itself
I was born here I was destined to be here and I don't care what destiny has in store for me as long as I am here

BHAI

He was my students in the Latif Compound
He was not interested in studying but I was interested in teaching him
Because his father paid me 5 rupees a month for teaching him
And 5 rupees was big money those days
His father, a strict watchman hanged him upside down and burnt the soles of his feet with a rod
Every time he knew he had failed
There were times when he tied him up and threw him in the midst of an army of angry red dangerous and starving ants
But nothing could change him
His father died, he soon found leaders who led him all along the wrong paths
He started off selling tickets outside theatres in the black market
He picked up lessons of living a rough life and became a king
They called him 'Bhai'
Violence was part of his life
I came to know when I lost touch with him and watched his 'progress' from a distance
And when I met him again he was 'David Bhai', a young men feared by one and all,
even admired and loved by a crowd of 'devotees'
He ruled, his word was law, no one could challenge him

Politicians, pandits, petty film producers and the limbs of the law played into his hands
He was the 'Bhai' of his empire, the unquestioned one
He arranged marriages, he settled marriage disputes
He celebrated every feast of here every religion, he arranged funerals, he helped run orphanages
He was blessed by the poor and dreaded by the other world
They call him the king of the underworld
Everything and everyone in his empire worked and lived according to 'David Bhai"s rules
He used weapons like use I use pen and pencils
He use them only when he was convinced what he was doing was not wrong, was not evil
Soon he became a cult figure, people touched his feet, asked him to bless their children, give them names, looked up to him for succor
He called me 'Gurubhai', his elder brother and I never knew how to feel
I could never pass judgment on my 'Bhai' who I still feel was destined to live a life which affected so many lives in so many ways
He lived his life his way till one day, that dark morning
I received to call which said it was all over
The people who loved to hate did away with him, he was dead
There were thousands of people lining the road to his final destination
And I keep wondering whether that was really his final destination
One living chapter in my life which makes my life so different from so many other lives

THE HUNGRY ANIMAL

Man is a hungry, he wants everything
He wants to be everything, he wants the world in his palms
He wants to fulfill all his ambitions
He wants to see all his dreams come true
He wants everything from everywhere
He wants to be in immortal
No, he believes he is immortal, he believes all that he has will last all his life
Foolish man, innocent man, stupid man, what is man?
He lives only to want everything without knowing or pretending not to know
That nothing lasts, that he is not forever
That the only end, whatever he is while he lives, is the grave, the kabristan,
the crematorium and the Tower Of Silence

MAN V/S MAN

Man has his own reasons to say he is a great conquer
He has reached the moon and now he threatens to conquer every planet
When will the man know that he is no one to conquer?
He has shown signs of already growing into a new Frankenstein
When will men learn to love and care for his fellow human beings?
When will man decide that enough is enough and all competition, all conquests,
all power are temporary, a pastime.
And that man has to come conquer himself and redeem the man in himself before the world turns into man's greatest enemy

FRAUD

It is a sad way to end my first innings, the major part of my life
But as I see life around me, I see everything around me turning into a world based on one principle, FRAUD
All relationships, all religions, all values, all the great teachings
All the great foundations on which life is built life is based on
is thriving on fraud, on falsehood, on farce
And truth has turned into a leper begging in a dark corner the market place the world has turned into
I am not a pessimist
I have still not lost hope, will not
That is all I have lived so long
I am sure I will live like that
I only wish man would discover the truth about himself before I know the final truth, and say my final farewell

STOP THAT WHEEL

I see a dream, no, I think it is a nightmare
I see myself drinking in one of those cheap speakeasies
I shudder in fear as I gulp the first drink
Hadn't I sworn I would not visit a speakeasy again?
Hadn't I suffered enough because of them
By the poison they served in 'quarters'?
But there I was drinking away to glory
All fear gone away after the first frightening drink
Hadn't I become an alcoholic, a drunkard?
Hadn't I spent my mornings, afternoons and nights living and drinking in all kinds of strange places with strange people?
Hadn't I met with major accidents because of drinking?
Hadn't I fallen from trains and buses and rickshaws only to be saved by miracles?
Hadn't I been robbed, beaten and thrown out on deserted streets?
Hadn't I been accused of robbing the house of a relative who turned out to be an enemy?
Hadn't I spent thousands of rupees in all kinds of hospitals to rid myself of the curse?

And then walked back to all those speakeasies again soon after walking out of all those hospitals after taking one more oath?
Hadn't I broken so many oaths?
Hadn't torn so many solemn promises in tatters?
Then what was I doing in that dark speakeasy in that dream?
Don't I have a heart, a soul, a conscience or at least a liver?
What was I doing in that accursed place drinking with strangers who looked like messengers of doomsday?
And then I see myself being carried away by four men just like my daddy was carried 44 years ago
With naughty boys running after him screaming 'bewda hai, bewda hai'
Was the wheel coming full circle?
Was history repeating itself?
Was I turning into the reincarnation of Haroon Ali?
No, I screamed and woke up in a sweat
No, I will not let the wheel turn
No, I will not let history repeat itself
No, I will not let Ali Peter John live the life Haroon Ali lived
No, know I will you Allie. you live the life
And with God and Molly (who I am sure will be a saint soon)
And with Usha, my wife and Swati, my daughter, by my side
I will succeed in stopping the wheel, even breaking the wheel if possible
I still have several bits and pieces to gather
I want to live till I gather the best of them to present to posterity when the time comes

WHY WISH MY WILL

The future, what about the future?
I had no future
A future was shaped for me
I have never worked about the future
I have never worried about the present, the past or the future
I am more worried about crossing the road and my receding hairline
About my falling teeth, about the pain in my calves
They are more crucial to me then the future
The future is unpredictable, unreliable bitch
And I have been ditched by many
I have never worried about them, then why should I worry about this one?

But I am worried about the future
Of of our future
Of the future of our children who will be the future
They are living through troubled times
Times like history has never seen before, has never been tortured before
I am no Nostradamus, I am no astrologer, no prophet, no soothsayer,
not even a parrot-wallah prophet
But I can see dangerous clouds created by man for man but ...
I am very sure man who has survived all the odds will survive
I am sure man will rediscover himself, be born again
I may not be there, the generation may not be there, but men will always
be there
Man is a ferocious fighter
I have faith in his faith to fight all battles, break away from all evil bonds
and build that brave new world which our generation
has only dreamed of
That is my wish, my will, my prayers for the future

I'LL NOT CRY

My mummy check me in
Safe delivery, they said but the baby hasn't cried till now
He has to cry, the newborn baby has to cry!
The doctor told my anxious parents
They hanged me upside down
The twisted and turned my little body
They pinched me to hurt me to cry
They tried their worst to hurt we will it hurt most but I still refused to cry
'Baba rota nahin hai, baba rota nahin hai' said the midwives,
ward boys and 'ayahs' screamed as their rushed from one ward to another
Till Dr Lulla did something terrible to me, my mother told me years later
I cried at last and they all clapped with joy
Dr Lulla even sent up a prayer to all his Gods

He has never delivered ‘a stubborn boy’ like me he announces
Strange isn't it?
The first thing they want a newborn who checks into the world is for him to cry
They start celebrating only when the baby cries
Somehow I feel somewhere within me that was the time.
difficult to believe though, when I decided that I would try not to cry
My flight has been through rough weather
Nit has passed through dark, ravaging and even rapist clouds most of the time
I have failed at times, miserably failed
Dr Lulla would have been a happy man I am sure if I would have cried during these bad times
But I have tried never to cry, never to cringe, never to crumble in the most cruel circumstances
I have loved happiness, I have loved loved
I have loved the times when I lost my mother, when I lost Molly, when I lost my little brother
I love those time because they helped me grow into a tougher man
I have reached midway, the flight ahead is unpredictable
The pilot keeps on asking the passengers to fasten their seat belts, I refuse because I know
My pilot is a different pilot, a pilot who flies the entire world in one flight
I don't think he is a foolish pilot
He has flown me safely till now
He will see that I have a safe landing in a place chosen by him some day

PLEASE DON'T HATE LOVE

And finally my friends
Please don't hate happiness
I know there are many who do
Please don't hate love
I know there are many who do
Please don't hate understanding
I know there are many who do
I know there is more misunderstanding that understanding today
Please don't hate those who sow and spread love
I know there are many who do
Please forget the world we are living in
It has not got a pretty face
We are all guilty of disfiguring it
Please think of giving that face and a new look
I know there are many who don't want to see that face because
they know they will see their own faces in that one long face
And please don't hate piece
Or the world will go to bits and pieces
I have lived my life till now in bits and pieces
I would hate to see the word I love go to bits and pieces

VOTE OF THANKS

This is a rare but real vote of thanks coming straight from the heart on my fiftieth birthday
I take this opportunity to thank
Every part of my body which has kept me going through life, kept my soul, my feelings
my conscience alive
I thank my head, my brain my, skull
I thank my forehead, my face, my ears, my eyes, my nose
My throat, my neck, my Adam's apple, my voice
I thank my mouth, my teeth, my spinal chord
I thank every bone in my body
I thank my shoulders. my hands and legs
I specially thank my heart and liver
For taking the trouble they have the trouble that I have given them like very few have

I thank every organ in my body, every nerve, every blood vessel, every artery, every tissue,
every drop of sweat and blood
I thank all the complicated systems of my delicate body
I don't know how to thank them but I will always be thankful
I also thank all the combs, the toothbrushes, the vehicles, the clothes the chappals all my pens down the years who have given up their lives to bring my life to life
I am grateful to all of them now when I have released more than half my way
With the cooperation of all these companions
If they could tolerate me, I feel they could tolerate anybody anywhere
Who is greater, the body, the mind or the soul?
I'll spend the rest of my life trying to find answers
To these questions or to solve the problems for the future
Not for me so much I have lived more than my share
I am living on borrowed time now
But ft all all the human beings to come in time to come

LIARS

And as I come to the end
Of my first attempt to try and tell you the truth about myself till now
I must confess that I am also a great liar
I have lied to save lives
I have lied to save love, love more than anything else
I have lied to find food to satisfy my hunger
I have at times, had a choice to live or to drink
I have had to life and lived to drink
I have lied to protect peace
I have lied in the name of understanding
I have lied to save my life when truth stood a silent spectator
Am I a coward?
I have light to defend myself against the devil
Am I a coward?
I have lied to hide my poverty
I had to in a world where poverty is a crime, a curse
I have lied to save men, women and children

When the truth would have crucified them
I have lied under the force of fear
So much fear, all kinds of fear, a world where fear is a religion now
I have lied to hide the hideous face of humanity
I have lied to my wife time and again
I don't know why, I never knew why, how I wish I knew why
I have lied to save anyone and everything dear to me
And the dearest thing to me is the truth
I have led to save the truth
Yes, the truth to depends on lies
If the truth is to thrive in these killing times
I have lied truthfully(?)
I have lied never to let my lie hurt or wound
I had lied never to let my lie lead to hate
I have lied when the truth has looked at me like a helpless lamb
I have lied to take away all evil and bring all good
I don't care if my lies or call crimes because I believe
My lies are a part of my attempt at reaching the truth
The truth about some lies is better than the truth preached by priests, pundits and philosophers from pulpits
I have lied only to reach the truth, believe me
Does it all sound like little a riddle, a story difficult to believe, a man's dilemma?
I don't know, only time knows the ultimate truth and only time will tell

PREFACE TO THE 2nd EDITION OF MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

STANDING ON THE SANDS OF TIME , STILL PICKING UP BITS AND PIECES OF LIFE

It us difficult for me to believe that twenty two years have passed since I wrote my autobiography , which was nothing short of a miracle , I feel as I look back on that chapter of my life which will always be memorable for me

What has changed for me during all these years ? Nothing much , but I am grateful to life and whoever has given me life to have kept me alive for the " last seventy two years" . The only thing that has not changed in my life is my undaunted ability to love my mother after so many years , to love Molly who I now don't think I can stop loving till life itself stops for me , and I can still love with the same passion like I am now when I am madly in love with a beautiful grandmother who I have only seen in photographs and whose voice I have only heard on my mobile . Call me a mad old man if you wish , but I will not stop loving even if the world tells me that it is going to end.

I didn't want to go into too many details about how life has treated me in the last twenty two years because I hate being called a man who thinks negatively , which I am not and will never be . Is facing the truth and telling the truth as I know it and understand it a crime or a sin as the holy men and women of every hollow and shallow religion wants the world to believe , for their own good and for their bread , butter and of course their jam or mushrooms

The politicians were the scum of the earth twenty two years ago , but they have improved , they have become the most filthy form of dirt which should be done away with as soon as possible in the interest of the country we live in and the entire human race . Am I sounding bitter when I say this which is no nothing but the bitter truth

The poor are growing poorer and the very rich are growing richer and every plan and project made by the rich men's politician - friends are only made for them and the poor are left to beg in the same places where their forefathers used to beg once upon a time

The brothels and the prostitutes my hero Sahir Ludhianvi wrote about seventy years ago are still standing behind those colourful and dark cages while pimps prowl around trying to strike a bargain with sick men who crave for their sick and harrowing and wrecked and wracked bodies covered

up with coloured powders and creams to hide their age and their distraught conditions and the politicians and the powers that be compete with one another to have their pounds of flesh . Will this inhuman business ever stop ? I don't think it will as long as we have human beings who are only waiting to have a hungry go at whatever they can get for a few coins (sikke) as Sahir described the coins that were flung at the hopeless , hungry and homeless species of human beings

Every little thing that Sahir and his friends like K A Abbas , Kaifi Azmi and Firaq Gorakhpuri described in their eternal poetry is still the same and it looks like nothing is going to change soon or ever . Am I telling a lie or exaggerating matters ? Don't ask me , think about what I am saying seriously and come to your own conclusions and you will know how much it hurts and wounds to live in a society and a country we are living in today

Women were expecting to see a bright future for them , but the more they wait , the more distant their wait grows and man keeps growing into the brute his fellow men encourage him to grow into

I have been watching my home , my lane , my samaj , my state , my country and even my world to find bits and pieces of hop all through the day and return home empty - handed only to go to bed and dream of a better tomorrow which as not come in the last seventy two years ,

AND SHOULD I LOSE HOPE OR CLING ON TO HOPE WHICH IS THE ONLY HOPE WE ORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS HAVE IN A COUNTRY WHERE EXTRAORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS HAVE TAKEN AWAY WHATEVER REINS OF THE COUNTRY THAT ARE LEFT

AND WHAT DOES ONE SAY ABOUT THAT GOD WHO HAS ALSO BECOME A PARTIAL AND A DIRTY GOD AND SIDES ONLY WITH THE SINNERS AND THROWS THE POOR , THE NEEDY AND THE OPPRESSED BY THE ROADSIDES AND GUTTERS FROM WHERE THEY CAN EITHER RISE OR SELL THEMSELVES INTO THE HANDS OF THE DEVIL WHOSE BUSINESS IS FLOURISHING THESE DAYS AND GOD IS DOING NOTHING ABOUT IT , WHY GOD , WHY ARR YOU TAKING REVENGE ON US YOUR DEDICATED DEVOTEES WHO ARE ON THE VERGE OF LOSING FAITH IN YOU

FORGET US , WE WILL DO SOMETHING TO SURVIVE LIKE WE HAVE BEEN DOING FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS

BUT , WHAT ABOUT YOU DEAR GOD WHO HAVE BEEN CLAIMING TO BE THE MASTER , THE MESSIAH AND THE ULTIMATE MIRACLE WORKER WHO HAS THE POWER TO SAVE , HEAL AND LEAD YOUR PEOPLE TO A PLACE CALLED

JANNAT WHICH NO MAN OR WOMAN HAS SEEN TO THIS DAY .

DID I SOUND SO BITTER WHEN I WROTE MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY? NO , I DIDN'T, BECAUSE I WAS STILL QUITE INNOCENT ABOUT THE WILD WAY OF MAN , MAN TURNING DEVIL AND THE MURDEROUS WAYS OF MEN AND WOMEN GROWING WILDER

I AM VERY HAPPY TO KNOW THAT I MAY NOT BE LUCKY ENOUGH TO STAND ON THE SANDS OF TIME FOR LONG , I AM HAPPY BECAUSE I WILL NOT HAVE TO SEE THE LAST DAYS OF A WORLD WHICH MY MOTHER AND SAHIR LUDHIANVI HAD DREAMT OF SEEING ONE DAY WOH SUBAH KABHI TOH AAYEGI , AAPNE KAHA THA SAHIR SAHAB , USS SUBAH KA INTEZAR KARTE KARTE MAIN AUR MERE JAISE LAAKHO LOG HAIRAAN HO GAYE HAI AUR BEINTAHA THAK GAYE HAI . ABB TOH BATA DIJIYE KI WOH SUBAH KABHI AAYEGI YA NAHI

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ali Peter John has had several problems with his name. He does not have a ration card, nor does he have a passport, all because of his odd-sounding name. He is an M. A. in English literature from the Bombay University, but he believes that he has learnt more in the University of Abbas than he has learnt at the university.

He was writing for India's prominent film magazine *Screen* for forty-eight long years and his column, *Ali's Notes*, has been accepted as a landmark by the film industry and readers who has been following him. He has written in almost all the newspapers and magazines of India on a variety of subjects about films. He has published twenty books during the last twenty years in his own way. The most prominent book according to him is his autobiography, Life-Bits and Pieces, which had its cover designed by the renowned painter M. F. Husain, the autobiography has also been translated in various languages. His circle of friends includes all the legends and down to .

He has been living his own simple life without expecting anything from life. He is now writing for a leading Hindi film magazine Mayapuri and at 71, he writes at least two articles every day. He hopes to write till he can no longer write.

OTHER BOOKS BY THE PUBLISHER

For more information please visit
http://hindi-movies-songs.com/joomla/index.php/published-books

1 Edwina: An Unsung Bollywood Dancer of the Golden Era, by Prof Surjit Singh (2015)
2 The RMIM Minibus (1992-): A Compendium of Selected Writings About Indian Films, Their Songs and Other Musical Topics From a Pioneering Internet Discussion Group, by Prof Surjit Singh (2017)
3 Music and Arts in Hyderabad Deccan: A Contribution to the History and Culture of Bygone Days, by Kamalakar Pasupuleti (2017)
4 Indurani: An Unsung but Unforgettable Heroine of the Early Talkies by Prof Surjit Singh (2017)
5 Sahraa Sahraa (Urdu poetry, Hindi and Urdu editions), by Raj Kumar Qais (2017)
6 Telugu Filmography Volume 1 (1932-1980) by Dr Venkata S Vutukuri (2018)
7 Telugu Filmography Volume 2 (1981-2000) by Dr Venkata S Vutukuri (2018)
8 The Lost Treasure: Early Hindustani Talkies: Based on Contemporary Material, by Kamalakar Pasupuleti and Prof Surjit Singh (2018)
9 Forgotten Artists of Early Cinema and The Same Name Confusion, by Arunkumar Deshmukh and Prof Surjit Singh (2018)
10 Drops on a Leaf by Jyoti Bhamra (2018)
11 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast (1933-1937), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2019)
12 Illustrated History of Punjabi Cinema (1935-1985), by Bhim Raj Garg (2019)
13 Unsung Junior Artists of Hindi Cinema Who Debuted Before 1961, by Upendra Samaranayake and Prof Surjit Singh (2019)
14 Beete Hue Din (Forgotten Memories of Hindi Cinema) by Shishir Krishna Sharma (2020, English, 2021, Hindi)
15 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast II (1938-1940), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
16 Unsung Junior Artists of Hindi Cinema Who Debuted After 1959, by Upendra Samaranayake and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
17 Master Ebrahim: The Forgotten Ace Clarinetist, by Prof Surjit

Singh (2021)
18 Censor Certificate Information of Hindi Talkies (1931-2010), by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
19 Background Dancers in Hindi Films (1952-68), by Edwina Violette, Narsingh Agnish and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
20 Films Showing in Madras Theatres (1941-1947), by MV Surender, N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
21 Rainbow of Emotions, by Lalit Berry (2021)
22 The Caliginous Light, by Rashmin Bhardwaj (2021)
23 Witnessing Wonders, by Ali Peter John (2021)
24 Laxmikant-Pyarelal Music Forever, An LP Era ::1963-1998, by Ajay Poundarik (2021)
25 MY DEV Memories of an Immortal Man by, Ali Peter John (2021)
26 Silent Cinema In India 1913 – 1934 When Silence Spoke In Celluloid by Sanjeev Tanwar (2021)
27 MUNNA The boy who grew into a legend by Ali Peter John (2021)
28 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast III (1941-1942), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
29 Early Hindi Film Advertisements (1935-39), by N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
30 WITH YOU, MAA, WITHOUT YOU, OH MAA! by Ali Peter John (2021)
31 The Bitter-Sweet Cocktail, Movies, Music, Wine, Women, The Life and Times of C. Ramchandra by Dilip Shripad Phansalkar (2022)
32 Hindi Talkie Filmography (1951-1960) by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2022)
33 Tujhe Mere Geet Bulate Hain – Pt Bharat Vyas Filmography by Sanjeev Tanwar (2022)
34 The Golden Era of Hindi Film Music by Ashok Jagtap (2022)